

11-3-1995

## Montana Kaimin: City Vote '95, November 3, 1995

Associated Students of the University of Montana

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/studentnewspaper>

---

### Recommended Citation

Associated Students of the University of Montana, "Montana Kaimin: City Vote '95, November 3, 1995" (1995). *Montana Kaimin, 1898-present*. 8851.

<https://scholarworks.umt.edu/studentnewspaper/8851>

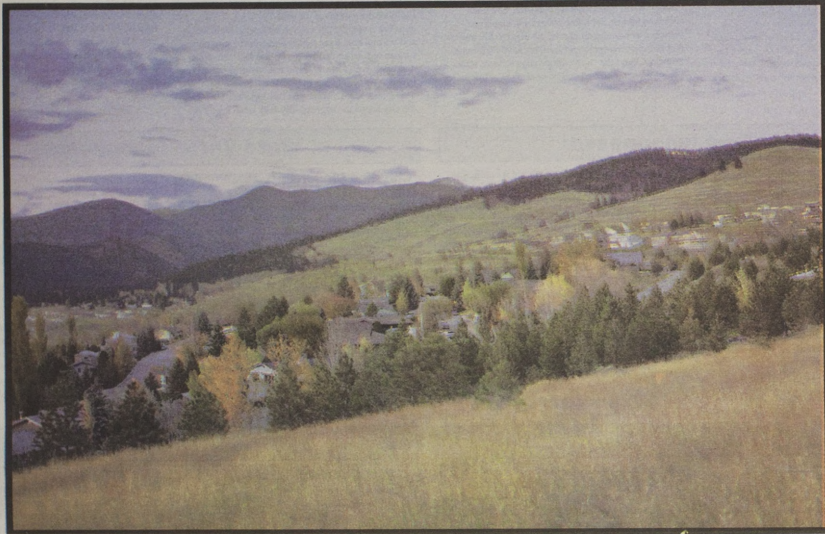
This Newspaper is brought to you for free and open access by the Associated Students of the University of Montana (ASUM) at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Montana Kaimin, 1898-present by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@mso.umt.edu](mailto:scholarworks@mso.umt.edu).

# City Vote '95

Friday, November 3, 1995

A Montana Kaimin Special Section

Stuart Thorburn/KAIMIN



INTO THE GREAT WIDE OPEN — Voters will be asked on Tuesday whether they want to pony up the tax dollars to finance bonds that will preserve some of the area's open spaces, including portions of Mount Jumbo, Mount Sentinel and the North Hills.

*Behold, the student vote. This traditionally apathetic voting bloc is getting much attention this year. Property owners curse it, Open Space advocates court it. Both wonder whether students this year can*

## Turn the election tide

**M**issoula's Sept. 12 city primary election only brought out single-digit percents of registered voters. The exception was Ward 1, which encompasses UM, where 12 percent of the voters turned out. Don't let that figure fool you, only three of UM's 898 registered voters cast ballots.

On Tuesday students have a chance to blow that minuscule number out of the water. During the upcoming general election, registered voters from across the city have the opportunity to cast ballots for their ward's council member and decide the fate of a \$5 million open space bond. State law mandates that 40 percent of Missoula's registered voters cast ballots on the bond issue to ensure that an appropriate cross-section of the town is represented. Some Open Space Bond advocacy groups have targeted students as a part of their massive voter registration drives. Student open space groups set up shop in the University Center for days at a time and the Missoulian has speculated on its editorial page about the impact students could have on this particular issue. In a recent Missoulian phone-in, opponents outnumbered propo-

nents by almost two-to-one, many concerned with the power of the student vote.

The student vote has got people talking.

"That's why it just disgusts me that students (will vote). It being such an environmental university, it's pretty obvious how they're going to vote," one anonymous caller said.

"... And I think that's why I want to vote no, just to offset one student vote."

Still, students have the lowest turnout in elections traditionally, said Jim Lopach, UM professor of political science. The 18- to 21-year-old group of voters is least likely to vote, Lopach said, and that group's turnout is "even lower than the very elderly." And, he added, local election turnout is lower than presidential, congressional or state elections.

Part of the reason young voters don't cast ballots, Lopach explained, is that they tend not to understand how politics affect their lives. They haven't yet "developed a public perspective," Lopach said, because at this age people tend to be more centered on private and personal issues than public ones.

Please see "Vote" on Page Three

BECKY SHAY



# Candidate Crib Notes

## A Student Voters' Guide

### Lois Herbig

AGE: 68  
 FAMILY: Husband, Harold; four grown sons  
 OCCUPATION: Retired, UM botany department  
 PARTY: Democrat; represented City of 1980-88  
 FAMILY DEFINITION: Herbig notes that having a roommate is about the only way some people can afford housing with today's high cost of living. She says enforcement of issues such as noise pollution and junk car violations is an answer to housing problems the city has tried to mediate through the family definition.



**OPEN SPACE:** A proponent of open space, Herbig says she feels it's essential to Missoula's economy because it helps maintain the area's standard of living. If the bond passes, she says it is vital that the city seek and "really listen to" public input. She adds that student input is "very important," and that students are often "sold far too short," although they add to the economy and atmosphere of Missoula.

**PARKING DISTRICT:** Herbig served on City Council when the district was enacted. She cites access to homes, for homeowners and emergency vehicles, as an integral part of the district. She notes that both homeowners and students have legitimate grievances and the "two entities need to have some sort of meeting ground and be part of the solution," to parking problems.

### Ward Two (unopposed)

#### Jim McGrath

AGE: 37  
 FAMILY: Wife, Julie Hoffman; two sons  
 OCCUPATION: Freelance writer  
 PARTY: Democrat  
 FAMILY DEFINITION: McGrath says he would like to see Missoula's family definition ordinance done away with. He notes that if the new council is progressive enough, chances are something will be done to change the ordinance. McGrath says the word "family" doesn't belong in land-use planning, and the city should look at impact, not relationships, as a solution to the housing problem.

**OPEN SPACE:** This is key to local quality of life,



McGrath says. He says he doesn't see it conflicting with affordable housing and growth, as long as the community plans for growth. He notes that it's ironic that citizens would be upset about students voting on the bond, because for years there has been a push to get students to vote. "Going from 20 votes to several hundred isn't going to make a change in the big picture of what Missoula looks like," he says.

**PARKING DISTRICT:** McGrath says parking in the university-area is a UM problem. "UM needs to be responsible," he says. "There's a huge traffic problem." McGrath feels that UM has taken a step in the right direction by contracting with Mountain Line for students and faculty to ride free, and also points to UM as "one of the more accessible places for non-motorized transportation."

### Ward Four

#### Lawrence Anderson

AGE: 52  
 FAMILY: Wife, Linda; two grown children  
 OCCUPATION: Owner East Gate Rental and Party Center  
 PARTY: Republican  
 FAMILY DEFINITION: Anderson says he won't have a stance on the ordinance until he does more research. He does see legitimate concerns "with more than a quota family living in a house, there is the possibility of additional cars and increased noise. That puts more demand on a neighborhood." But, Anderson noted that having six roommates during his years at UM helped cut his cost-of-living.

**OPEN SPACE:** He is for open space, but against the bond as a way of raising money. "This could have been a community project we were all involved with,"



Anderson says. Instead, the bond issue has turned some people who are in favor of open space into adversaries, because they don't agree with the funding mechanism. Rather than a bond, Anderson would have preferred to see local fund raising and financial support from groups such as the Sierra Club.

**PARKING DISTRICT:** Anderson admits that parking in Missoula has problems, but so does alternate forms of transportation. He feels that UM had a good idea when it contracted with Mountain Line to provide the campus community with bus service. The way Missoula is laid-out, he says, creates too many physical problems for busing, such as dead-end trips up Patten Canyon.

### Ward Five

#### Scott Morgan

AGE: 55  
 FAMILY: Wife, Barbara  
 OCCUPATION: Investment manager and organizational consultant  
 PARTY: Democrat  
 FAMILY ORDINANCE: Morgan would rather see the problems that the family definition ordinance addresses handled through laws that define what is a nuisance in neighborhoods. "I'd be happy to see it changed along those lines," he says.

**OPEN SPACE:** Morgan says he thinks that city would do well to acquire "well-selected" open space to enhance the quality of life. But, he says, through door knocking he is aware that "there are a certain



number of people, who any increase in taxes will be felt immediately as a burden." He says he's a "little worried," about voting in such a large levy when voters may be asked to pass other large bonds in the next few years, such as for a jail or for developing sewage treatment plants. Morgan says he "encourages students to vote whenever and wherever they can."

**PARKING DISTRICT:** While he has reservations about the district, Morgan says they are not detailed enough to form a position. He is a fan of alternative forms of transportation, partly because it is a quality of life issue. He would like to see a reduction in auto use and he strongly supports bike/pedestrian paths and jogging areas.

#### Robert Kelly

AGE: 59  
 FAMILY: Two grown sons, three grandchildren  
 OCCUPATION: Retired disability  
 PARTY: Republican  
 FAMILY DEFINITION: Kelly feels that the family definition ordinance is "proper." He says he has no problem with two or more people constituting a family, but there is trouble when a bunch of people live in a house not suited for that many people. He also stresses that tenants should be responsible for the rental space they are in.

**OPEN SPACE:** Kelly says he is against the bond

"100 percent." He says there are a lot of people in Missoula who have to make a choice between filling prescriptions and buying food, and he is against any spending that is not required by law or for public safety. Kelly says he appeals to the students' conscience to "think about your elders and vote against" the bond. He says people who want to pay for open space can do so individually through donations rather than driving up the cost-of-living through a bond issue.

**PARKING DISTRICT:** Kelly can remember "when you could park almost anywhere," around campus, but "parking just seems to disappear." He suggests public transportation should be strengthened to relieve parking problems.

### Ward Six

#### Carl 'Andy' Sponseller

AGE: 39  
 FAMILY: Wife, Kathy  
 OCCUPATION: Owner of On Call Welding  
 PARTY: Democrat  
 FAMILY DEFINITION: Sponseller says this is a hard topic to "land on one way or the other." He says it is his concern that "people need to respect each other's rights and co-exist in a neighborly fashion." He feels that if the city could enforce and possibly strengthen the ordinances already on the books the number of people living in a home would be less important.

**OPEN SPACE:** Sponseller supports the bond and considers open space a matter of public health. He says the people who are surrounded with open space



are more relaxed and have a better outlook on life. As an owner of a home and commercial properties, Sponseller says he has no problem with students voting on the bond. He says denying students the vote is, "absolute poppycock."

**PARKING DISTRICT:** Sponseller says that parking takes up a huge amount of space on campus that could be used for more productive purposes. He proposes eliminating parking on campus and calls for UM to provide off-campus parking with a shuttle bus running on a five- or ten-minute cycle.

Four Missoula City Council seats are up for grabs this year. Here is a rundown on where the candidates say they stand on three key issues: single-family zoning, the Residential Parking District and the Open Space Bond. Single-family zoning restricts more than two unrelated people from living together. Passed and expanded upon by the city, the Residential Parking District restricts parking on streets around UM to residents only. See Page Three for more details about the Open Space Bond. If you have questions about where to vote, call the Missoula County Elections office at 523-4751.

### Ward One

#### Paul LeCours

AGE: 46  
 FAMILY: Husband, Bob; six children, ages 8 to 28; four grandchildren  
 OCCUPATION: Stay-at-home mother  
 PARTY: Republican  
 FAMILY DEFINITION: LeCours doesn't favor the ordinance as it stands. She says that because landlords and tenants both have valid concerns, the city must find an ordinance that serves both sides. "Students don't deserve to live in trash, nobody deserves to live in the city. Or next to it," she explains. Rather than mandating how many people can live together, she says, the city needs to "aggressively seek out," a way for



landlords, tenants and homeowners to get along.

**OPEN SPACE:** LeCours supports open space, but says that the city needs to "plan and design, not just buy land at the last minute." Whether the bond issue passes or fails, she says she sees growth management as a key to preserving open space. LeCours says that designing where growth takes place, where roads and sewers go, is a more proactive approach. She also calls for the city and county governments to work together to solve growth problems.

**PARKING DISTRICT:** Parking is an issue LeCours says she plans to research, because so many people are affected by a lack of parking. She notes that visibility is a problem because Missoula's roads are not wide enough to include walking/biking lanes.

### Ward Three (unopposed)

#### Christine Gingerelli

AGE: 43  
 FAMILY: Husband, Lou; two children  
 OCCUPATION: Substitute teacher  
 PARTY: Democrat (Incumbent)  
 FAMILY DEFINITION: Gingerelli says she understands the problems many people have with the "possible discriminatory appearance," the ordinance has, but she will uphold it until city leaders find another way to deal with neighborhood problems. She says that "theoretically," there should be other ways to deal with the problems such as parking and noise, but law enforcement and Missoula's Office of Community Development don't have the "person power" to enforce ordinances that attack the problems



individually.

**OPEN SPACE:** "I'm an absolute proponent," Gingerelli says. She sees the bond issue as the only way to preserve open space. Because federal laws prohibit zoning as a form to gain open space, she says, "fourth acquiring" Missoula's best way to preserve open space." She adds that Missoula is "saturated," with private fund raising and it would be impossible to privately raise enough money to purchase open space.

**PARKING DISTRICT:** Gingerelli says she won't support expanding the district because it creates a parking problem created by the "sheer number of cars generated by the university." She gives UM credit for encouraging Mountain Line ridership and building the parking structure, but suggests it may have to clamp down on the number of cars allowed on campus.

#### Myrt Charney

AGE: 64  
 FAMILY: Wife, Jean; four grown children and six grandchildren  
 OCCUPATION: Retired, municipal and state government, Alaska  
 PARTY: Democrat  
 FAMILY DEFINITION: Charney says he feels the family definition ordinance is too restrictive. He says that problems such as litter and disturbing the peace should be enforced by other means, rather than "just absolutely refusing to let people in." He says he feels that tenants should be responsible for the space they rent, but that the ordinance is penalizing people who are doing nothing

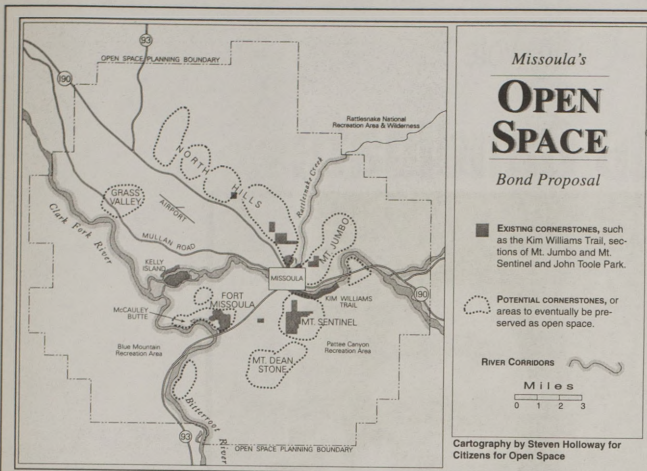


wrong.

**OPEN SPACE:** He supports open space, but feels the city should be more responsible for funding. Charney suggests \$5 million is not needed in a lump sum, but should be raised as the land goes on the market. If the bond passes, he feels the city should devise a way to help pay for it, taking some burden off the taxpayers. Charney says there is a need for recreation space for Missoula's children and that it is the city's responsibility to provide it.

**PARKING DISTRICT:** While Charney has sympathy for the parking problems university-area homeowners face, he feels it is UM's responsibility to provide parking, not the city's. He points to new buildings on campus and questions why underground parking was not included in the construction.





## Register and Win?

*Open Space groups registered students by the hundreds, hoping the UM vote will support the bond sale.*

**JUSTIN GRIGG**  
of the Kaimin

**A**dvocates for public preservation of Missoula's open spaces hope recent history doesn't repeat itself next Tuesday, and they're betting massive voter registration will stave off flashbacks of June 1994.

Back then, voters went to the polls to tell county commissioners whether they would finance the sale of \$8 million in bonds that the government would use to preserve Missoula County's open spaces.

But support wasn't the problem, said Jim Parker of Citizens for Open Space. Indeed, most of those who voted on the bonds voted "yes." But, bond sales are tricky things. State law says 40 percent of all registered voters must cast a positive ballot for them to pass. More than 40 percent voted, but too many left the open space ballot blank, Parker said. The bond failed.

On Tuesday, the city will ask its voters to pass a \$5 million bond to purchase and preserve Missoula's green spaces. And this time, open space advocate groups took to the streets, the airwaves and even to the University Center in a massive registration drive targeting anybody old enough to vote — including students, Parker said.

The drive garnered more than 800 new student voters said Kelley Segars, co-coordinator of Students for Open Space, who tracked campaign registration.

Some property owners are seeing red over the drive to register students. For the most part, students don't own land and won't be around for the 20 years it will take to pay off the bond, they say.

"I've heard that over and over and over again," said Pari LeCour, president of the Missoula Neighborhood Network.

Property owner's main argument is that the bonds would cost them a \$27-per-year increase in property taxes, which won't affect the students who are voting on the issue.

But property managers disagree. If passed, the tax hike would probably translate into rent increases, they say.

And, LeCour said, the right to vote is guaranteed. A little more than 14,000 Missoula voters must mark the "yes" box for the bond to be issued this time.

**S**hould the bond pass, a citizen committee has outlined parcels of land in and around Missoula, an open space wish list of sorts. The Open Space Advisory committee, a group assigned to make open space recommendations to the City Council, wants the city to preserve lands on Mount Jumbo, the south end of Mount Sentinel, at Fort Missoula, in the upper South Hills, in the North Hills, in the Clark Fork River corridors as well as areas for recreational playing fields and community trails (see map).

These and other areas are listed as part of the Missoula

Urban Area Open Space Plan which was adopted by the City Council in August, said Kate Supplee, an Office of Community Development open space planner.

That plan, she said, describes the vision of open space in Missoula by the year 2010.

The areas in the plan were chosen by the committee after conducting surveys at local fairs and over the telephone, said Ron Erickson, the committee's chairman.

Supplee said the community agreed on which parts of Missoula to protect.

"These areas were consistently identified by the community as having high open space value," Supplee said.

*Some property owners  
are seeing red over the  
drive to register students.*

*For the most part, students  
don't own land and  
won't be around for the 20  
years it will take to pay  
off the bond, they say.*

One group opposed to the bond is the Montana Libertarian Party.

"We're against the \$5 million bond itself," said Mike Fellows of the Montana Libertarian Party. "We feel maybe it's a money issue and not an open space issue."

He said the party does not believe in raising property taxes to pay for a bond. The money should be raised through private fundraisers, he said.

Erickson said the purchase of Mount Jumbo will be at least partly funded by private funds raised by the Five Valleys Land Trust, a Missoula organization that protects land locally.

Greg Tollefson, director of the organization, said \$30,000 in cash has been raised and a \$100,000 matching grant from the Elks Foundation was secured for Mount Jumbo.

"We expect to mount a serious public fund-raising effort once the bond issue is decided," he said.

If the referendum is passed, the bonds would have to be issued before any areas could be bought, said Ron Mason, the city's finance director, and that would take about nine months.

The decision as to which areas will be bought is ultimately up to the Missoula City Council, Erickson said, but his committee will advise the council on which areas are the best buy.

He said that \$5 million is nowhere near enough money to buy all the areas on the ballot. His committee would like to see a balance of conservation lands, playing fields, trails and other types of areas so everyone can enjoy the benefits of open space, he said.

"All of those things would have to be in the mix or we would be very disappointed," Erickson said.

The first time the city faced an open space bond was in 1980.

Voters approved a referendum allowing the city to issue \$500,000 in open space bonds, said Ron Mason, the city's finance director.

That money was used to buy land on Mount Sentinel, John Toole Park and the Kim Williams Trail.

So far, Mason said, the city has paid off all but \$90,000, plus interest, of that bond. That bond has to be paid off in June of 1998.

## Vote

from Page One

But private issues quickly become public in city ordinances such as the family definition. That's precisely why students should vote, said Kim Skornogowski of ASUM's Student Political Action.

"Students needs to be recognized as members of the community," she said. "Issues within the community affect students. The city makes decisions for us and on behalf of us."

Skornogowski urged students to vote for the council member of their choice because it is these people who "put ordinances like the family definition on the books and keep them there."

Five of the 10 council candidates, (Myrt Charney, Scott Morgan, Lois Herbig, Pari LeCour and Jim McGrath) told the Montana Kaimin that they feel the housing ordinance needs to be changed. Andrew Sponseller and Lawrence Anderson said they appreciate the burdens that overcrowding puts on neighborhoods, but they need to do more research before taking a stance on the ordinance. Incumbents Chris Gingerelli and Curtis Horton say they favor the ordinance as the only form of enforcement the city has for dealing with neighborhood problems.

The council this year passed a proposal to drop the number of renters constituting a boarding, lodging or rooming house from six to three. Its next step, Horton said, was to accept a proposal that would raise the "two or more unrelated" clause to three. But that option was tabled when ASUM, through the Montana Human Rights Commission, filed a complaint that the restriction is discriminatory.

ASUM President Matt Lee said he hopes the new candidates will speed the process to repealing the ordinance, instead of relying on the lengthy HRC process.

Skornogowski said the ordinance is another example of how some members of the community tend to appreciate the university, mainly the cultural aspect UM brings to Missoula, but not the students.

"We have an impact," she said. "We make Missoula Missoula."

**S**ome members of the Missoula community are concerned that students will make too much of an impact on the Open Space Bond. UM's 1995 voter registration drive came under fire this year because it became affiliated with the bond. Skornogowski said a number of student organizations got involved in the registration drive because of the bond issue. That's good, she said, because the added push made the registration drive a big movement across campus. The drive garnered more than 800 new voters said Kelley Segars, co-coordinator of Students for Open Space, who tracked campus registration.

Arguments for denying students the bond issue vote range from claims that students are short-time residents voting on a long-term bond to the idea that students won't pay on the bond because most aren't property owners who will fund the bond through a tax increase.

Property owners would pay an additional \$27 per year for 20 years to finance the bond sale.

Lopach cited a 1969 Supreme Court decision that upheld non-property owners' rights to vote. The court said age, registration requirements and residency are all legal restrictions that designed to ensure voters have an interest in the community. Whether a voter owns property doesn't provide a "compelling state interest," to justify denying the right to vote.

SPA takes issue with the assumption that all students are short-term residents, Skornogowski said. She noted that a number of Missoula residents, who aren't students, live in Missoula for less time than degree-seeking residents, but there's been little or no mention of denying these residents the vote.

But students do have a financial stake in the bond passing, analysts say. Lopach and Skornogowski both agreed it's a fallacy that renters won't carry the expense of the bond. Lopach called it the "pass-through phenomenon," in which costs are passed along to consumers.

Landlords aren't likely to simply eat that \$27 increase, spokespeople for two of Missoula's largest property management firms say. Garden City Property Management and Bitterroot Property Management each oversee more than 500 rental units in Missoula. While rents are up to the property owners, both companies expect to see an increase in rents to cover the possible bond issue tax increase.

"As owners' costs go up, rents go up. The bottom line is consumers pay for everything," said Steve Gross of Bitterroot Property Management. "I think students should be very, very thin-skinned and think about the personal, economic impact."

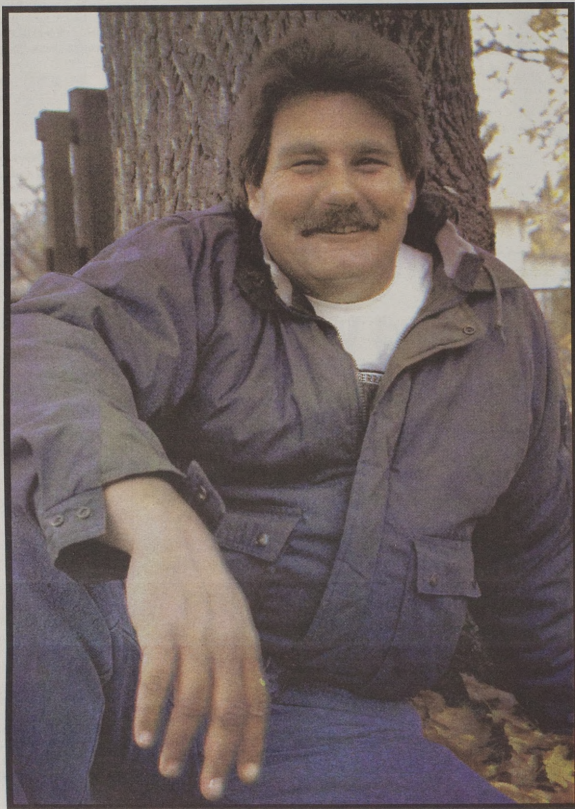
City council candidate Lawrence Anderson equated students voting on the bond to the ASUM fee referendum. Lawrence said non-property owning students can personalize the bond issue by relating it to how they feel about tuition and fee increases. While a small fee increase may not be bad on its own, when added to other increases it becomes burdensome. The same rings true for property tax increases, he said. Skornogowski said the uprising over students voting on the bond issue confirms student's responsibility to vote.

"It's now our obligation as students to go out and vote," she said. "If you aren't registered, get registered and next time get out and vote."



City Vote '95

# Joe Candidate



Stuart Thurnhull/KAMIN

*John Carlon wasn't looking to be president or eat power breakfasts when he ran for and lost a shot at a City Council seat, he just saw something that frustrated him and thought he could help out.*

BECKY SHAY

**W**hen John Carlon knocked on doors during his campaign for city councilman, the question people asked him most was: "What the hell do you want that job for?" Carlon says he threw his hat in the ring for the Ward 2 City Council position because he was frustrated: frustrated that the real issues aren't being addressed, frustrated that people don't have faith in government and frustrated that voters don't go to the polls.

In the Sept. 12 primary vote, Carlon was beat out by fellow Democrat Jim McGrath. McGrath is running unopposed on Tuesday's general election ballot.

Carlton's no politician, he's no professional deal-maker and he's got no aspirations for higher office. He's the Citizen Politician typical of local election — spurred to action by frustration and willing to lend a hand. There was more elbow-grease than glitz in his handmade signs. Carlton's wife, Jeanne, helped spearhead his campaign, which was run out of their house. There were no poll numbers to heed and no campaign swings, just a few strolls through his ward.

He doesn't regret a minute of it.

"I'm really glad I ran. But it's tough to lose, you don't run to lose," Carlton says.

"Anyone that runs and tells you they don't care if they lose is lying."

Carlton, 44, grew up with interests in the political process. His father was a state legislator in their home state of Florida. John F. Kennedy was one of his heroes. "I remember Eisenhower, but John Kennedy was the guy who excited me."

That type of excitement was decidedly missing in the public sector that Carlton campaigned in. What he found was that people don't think they have an active role in government. Some, he says, don't even think their vote counts.

"They'd say, 'What difference does one vote make?'" he recalls. "I tell them, 'Hey,

you have the same vote I do.'"

Carlton feels that the term "public official" isn't fitting. He thinks "public servant" is much more appropriate. He says the skill in being a public servant is bringing people together.

"I can be a bleeding-heart liberal or the worst conservative," he explains. "You have to take a middle ground. You have to see the good on both sides."

Carlton has to look long and hard to find good in the voter turnout that ended his campaign.

Ward 2 voters had the second highest turnout in the primary: 9 percent. That was behind Ward 1's 12 percent, but triple the turnout in other wards.

"If I'd won, I would serve. But I'd serve humbly with numbers like that," he says. "What bothers me about this election is there's 91 percent of the voters out there who we don't know what they want."

Carlton equates poor voter turnout to a lack of faith in politicians. To counter that distrust, he says more "ordinary people," need to be involved in the government.

"Just regular people trying to serve," he says. "Not people dreaming about the next office they'll hold. People doing what they're asked to do: serve. The challenge for the foreseeable future is to try to teach people that all those little drops in the bucket add up."

He regrets not having money in place when he started campaigning.

"I wasn't going to go into debt over this," Carlton said. "I didn't want to lose in debt and I didn't want to win in debt."

Just because Carlton is out of the running for the council seat, he's not out of the picture. He is self-employed as a graphic artist and has donated signs in support of the open space bond. He is also working with Myrt Charney in his bid for the Ward 4 seat.